

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 ACDA-19 MC-02 SAJ-01 EB-11 OMB-01

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TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY BONN

USDEL MC

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

USNMR SHAPE

CINCUSAFE

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 023571

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EBXP, BE, NE

SUBJ: REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR F-104

REFS: BRUSSELS 457, THE HAGUE 5633 AND 238, USNATO 403 AND

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454, BONN 1774, BRUSSELS 679, PARIS 2664 AND 2666

1. REFTELS CONFIRM VIEW THAT NORTHROP P-530 AT PRESENT APPEARS TO BE LEADING U.S. CANDIDATES IN RUNNING AGAINST FRENCH SUPER F-1 FOR F-104G REPLACEMENT COMPETITION.

2. IN CONTEXT OF USNATO 403 WE WOULD LIKE YOUR VIEWS WHETHER THERE IS ANY INTEREST AMONG THE EUROPEANS TO DEFER F-104G REPLACEMENT SELECTION TO AWAIT EVALUATION OF YF-16 AND YF-17 TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS. (OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT SELECTION TIME FRAME COULD BE AS EARLY AS THIS MONTH.) ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF ANY DESIRE TO LINK THE REPLACEMENT DECISION TO THE OUTCOME OF THE U.S. EVALUATION, CLOSE SIMILARITY OF NORTHROP YF-17 TO ITS P-530 MIGHT TEMPT POTENTIAL PURCHASERS TO WANT TO BENEFIT FROM U.S. EVALUATION. IF THAT EVALUATION WERE TO FAVOR THE GENERAL DYNAMIC YF-16, EUROPEANS (NETHERLANDS AT LEAST) WOULD HAVE TO RE-EVALUATE THEIR DESIRE FOR A TWIN-ENGINED AIRCRAFT.

3. IT APPEARS THAT EUROPEANS MAY FIND IT POLITICALLY DIFFICULT TO WAIT FOR (A) THE OUTCOME OF OUR EVALUATION AROUND

JULY 1975 AND (B) FURTHER STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER FOR THE USAF INVENTORY. IT APPEARS THAT THE EUROPEANS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT IMMEDIATE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT WORK FOR THEIR ENGINEERS AND PRODUCTION WORK FOR THEIR AEROSPACE WORKERS.

4. BECAUSE OF THE MANUFACTURING AND ASSEMBLYING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE NORTHROP PROGRAM, ALREADY DISCUSSED WITH EUROPEANS, THE P-530 CAN BE VIEWED AS QUOTE EUROPEAN UNQUOTE OR QUOTE ATLANTIC UNQUOTE. IT APPEARS THAT THE NORTHROP PLANE MEETS THE MILITARY REQUIREMENTS OF NATO FOR A HIGH PERFORMANCE, HIGH TECHNOLOGY AIRCRAFT PROGRAM WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ALSO MEETING THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PARTICIPATION NEEDS OF EUROPEAN USERS.

5. IN CONVERSATIONS THIS WEEK WITH STAFF OF RANDALL SUBCOMMITTEE, HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, STAFF AGAIN WARNED THAT STRONG REACTIONS COULD BE EXPECTED FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS IF NATO COUNTRIES DECIDE IN FAVOR OF CONFIDENTIAL

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FRENCH AIRCRAFT. COMMITTEE IS TO REPORT TO HOUSE IN APRIL ON MILITARY EFFORT OF NATO ALLIES AND ITS REPORTS WILL COMMAND WIDE INTEREST IN CONGRESS AND IN NEWS MEDIA.

6. WE WISH TO ASSURE ALL POSTS THIS MATTER IS GETTING HIGH LEVEL ATTENTION HERE. KISSINGER

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